

FACTUAL APPEAL AND ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS OF FOUR-STAR HOTELS IN PORT HARCOURT**JOSEPH Chimaraoke¹****NADUBE Paul Meeting²****OGAN Henrietta Ingo³**¹²³Department of Marketing, Faculty of Administration and Management
Rivers State University, Port Harcourt**Corresponding email:** chijoe frank@gmail.com**Abstract**

The study investigated the relationship between factual appeal and advertising effectiveness of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt. Factual appeal was the predictor variable, while advertising effectiveness was the criterion variable. The study adopted a survey research design and correlational method of investigation. The study population comprised twelve (12) four-star hotels. Based on the small size of the population, a census was taken. Thirty-six (36) respondents comprising (business managers, front desk officers, and sales/booking managers) from the twelve (12) four-star hotels took part in the study. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Science, version 23.0. The p-values were calculated to determine the significance of the hypothesized relationships. The study showed positive and statistically significant relationship between factual appeal and measures of advertising effectiveness (brand awareness, attitude change and salience). The study therefore concludes that there is a positive significant relationship between factual appeal and advertising effectiveness of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt; and recommends that four-star hotels in Port Harcourt should adopt factual appeal as an essential advertising message strategy to improve effectiveness of their advertising messages.

Keywords: Advertising effectiveness, attitude change, brand awareness, factual appeal, salience**Introduction**

The hospitality industry play critical roles in economic growth and development of nations. The industry contributes significantly to the economy of Nigeria through revenue and employment generation, social services improvement and infrastructural and rural development (Kazaara & Christopher, 2023). Also, the hospitality industry is directly linked to Nigeria's cultural, economic and tourism potential (Wosu & Ogan, 2022).

Hostels constitute an important component of the hospitality industry. They are often differentiated by various factors that contribute to their status. These factors include the level of service provided, the quality of facilities and amenities, security, and overall customer experience (Dayani et al., 2022). However, due to intense competition in the industry, owners and managers of hotels are in constant pressure to boost their advertising effectiveness (Pavlik, 2022). One fundamental business practitioners and researchers in advertising and marketing communications have identified as key boosting advertising effectiveness message appeal.

It is imperative to identify the type of message that is most likely to appeal to a target audience, as competition intensifies and as consumer demographics, personality traits, and decision-making styles vary, and these are reflected in their responses to various advertising appeals (Chung & Braun, 2022). The message appeal utilized by a firm is an important aspect of any effective advertisement. For an advertising to achieve its objectives of creating awareness, changing attitudes, and standing out, it must resonate with the target audience (Mu et al., 2022).

Factual appeal which works on an audience's sense of reasoning or logic (Nadube & Isenah, 2022), is effective at persuading consumers, as it provide logical information regarding attribute of a brand or product. In the hospitality sector, factual appeal emphasizes a hotel's amenities, security, service quality, etc. The utilization of factual information can enhance brand awareness, create a positive attitude, and make an advertisement stand out, resulting in effectiveness of the advertising (Jin et al., 2023).

Despite the important role factual appeal plays (Soti, 2022; Chung & Braun, 2022; Widya, 2019; Cadet et al. 2017), there is a noticeable research gap in examining its relationship with advertising effectiveness, particularly in the context of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt. Thus, this study investigated that relationship. By investigating the relationship between factual appeal and advertising effectiveness of Four Star hotels in Port Harcourt, this study addresses the existing gap and provides valuable insights into both academic discourse and industry practice. The study is conceptualized in Fig. 1.

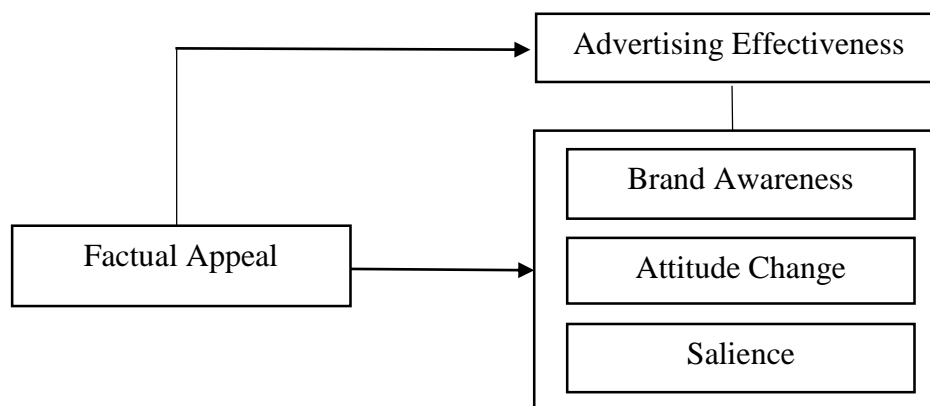


Fig. 1: Conceptual framework of relationship between factual appeal and advertising effectiveness.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation of the Study: Signaling Theory

Signaling theory (Spence, 1973) helps to explain actions when two entities, be it people or businesses, have access to different information. The primary goal of signaling theory is reduce information asymmetry between parties. One party (sender) can convey information about itself to another (receiver) through observable attributes or actions (signals) in an information asymmetry situation (Spence, 2002). According to Connelly et al. (2010), in order for signaling to be effective, the receiver must take action that benefit the signaler. This action typically entails choosing the signaler over others.

Signaling theory is adopted in this study because it offers a framework for understanding the connection between factual appeal and advertising effectiveness. Advertising messages that are well-crafted with the appropriate appeal act as cues that increase the advertised product or brand's attractiveness to the intended consumers. It appears that signaling is beneficial for both advertisers and customers. Sahni and Nair (2019) and Chatterjee et al. (2023) found that consumers gravitate towards advertisement that offer factual information that appeals.

Concept of factual appeal

An informative or rational tone in advertising is characterized by the presentation of facts that prove, with evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, that a product can address the target audience's problems or wants (Helmig & Thaler, 2010). According to Nadube and Isenah, (2022), factual appeal utilizes logic, reason, statistics, data, or factual information to convince an audience. Logical appeal is another name for factual appeal (Nadube, 2021). Rational evaluation of information by consumers is the foundation of factual appeal; as information provided in factual messages focus educating, informing, and persuading consumers through evidence-based discourse (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

According to Cutler and Javalgi (1993, as cited in Doong et al., 2012), providing factual information help consumers perceive less risk and make better use of intangible services. Advertisers establish credibility by creating and sharing contents that are verifiable and reliable.

According to Kozup et al. (2003), advertising messages that make use of factual appeal are more credible, hence, boost favourable brand perceptions and consumer confidence in the brand.

Concept of advertising effectiveness

Advertising is effective when it is able to achieve the objective for which it was designed. Advertising effectiveness refers to the degree to which an advertisement accomplishes its intended objectives. It reveals how the advertisement affected target audiences in terms of brand awareness, attitude change, purchase intention, and brand recommendation (Rasouli et al., 2021). The effectiveness of an advertisement is a measure of how the advertisement successfully achieves its objectives (Rasouli et al., 2021).

According to Wulandari and Suryawardani (2019), an effective advertisement is one that convey a message, evokes a response, is memorable, stands out, and encourages people to take action. Wulandari and Suryawardani (2019) also states that novelty, trustworthiness, like and low annoyance level are indicators of good advertising.

Businesses use advertising effectiveness as a metric to gauge their success in raising brand awareness, increasing sales, and fostering consumer involvement (Corvi & Bonera, 2010). Scholars offer various metrics of advertisement effectiveness. This study adopts brand awareness, attitude change and salience (Nadube, 2021).

Brand awareness: Brand awareness is a component of brand equity that influences consumer behavior (Susilowati & Sari, 2020). It is defined as the degree to which customers are able to identify and remember a brand and the characteristics linked to it. It is a crucial component for establishing and sustaining a strong brand presence in a market (Anand, 2023). According to Kotler et al. (2019), brand awareness is the amount of information customers remember about a brand, including positive and negative aspects.

Brand awareness is also defined as the degree to which a customer can easily recall and use a brand in their decision-making process (Shwastika & Keni, 2021). Consumers are more likely to choose a brand's products when they have a good level of familiarity with the brand (Permatahati & Setyanto, 2023). This suggests that when consumers are familiar with the brand, they are more likely to buy its goods.

Attitude change: Attitude can be described as individual's viewpoint and disposition towards an object, person or situation, as well as their tendency to respond positively or negatively to that object, person or situation (Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2016). In a conventional model, there are three parts of attitude: "cognitive" (thoughts and beliefs), "affective" (emotions, likes, and dislikes), and "behavioural" (what the person does or says in reaction to the object) aspects.

The term "attitude change" encompasses any shift in perspective, whether brought about by external influences or internal developments (American Psychology Association, 2018). According to Yozukmaz and Kılıç (2022), when a person's judgment about something shift in terms of direction and intensity, it is called attitude change. Similarly, Wee and Kroesen (2022) defines attitude change as alteration in people's views or opinions about anything. It can be influenced by many things, including values, social interactions, new experiences, advertising messages, and random events.

Salience: Salience is the degree to which a brand is noticeable or prominent across various communication channels. Salience enhance the ability of a brand to attract customers and set itself apart from competitors' messaging. Customers are more inclined to choose highly salient brands

during the purchase process since these brands are able to attract more attention and stand out from the crowd (Kapferer, 2012).

Plaza (2021) defines salience as the features that makes an advertisement stand out to the target audience and influence their decision. It describes how noticeable or attention-grabbing an advertisement is (Davydova, 2022). Salience goes beyond mere recognition; to reflect a brand's ability to command attention and distinguish itself in a certain context or category (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2004).

Factual Appeal and Advertising Effectiveness

There is ample evidence of the pivotal role of factual appeal in successful marketing communication. Factual appeal is linked to various consumer-based outcomes, and is considered a cornerstone of effective advertisement. Soti (2022) investigated the impact of advertising appeal on consumer behavior; and established that factual appeal strongly impact customer attitudes and and purchase intentions.

Chung and Braun (2022) examined the impacts of advertising message strategies on donation intention towards environmental issue. The study revealed that logical appeal affect both desire to donate and intention to suggest the cause to others. In a comparative study on rational appeal vs emotional appeal in forming consumer's interest through advertisement, Widya (2019) established that rational advertising messages significantly affect consumers' propensity to buy.

Also, Cadet et al. (2017) investigated the value of transformational and informational appeal on company Facebook pages. The study showed that while informational appeal offer more value, informational appeal resonate more with consumers and elicit more engagement. In a study that examined the connection between consumers' cognitive information processing styles, effectiveness of advertisements, and rational advertising appeals, Borborjafari et al. (2016) established that rational thinking style positively affects efficacy of advertisement.

In addition, Chang et al. (2016) carried out a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) study of advertising appeals and their relationship with product attractiveness and buying intentions. The results demonstrated substantial activation in regions of the brain linked to logical evaluation of decisions, suggesting a shift towards more logical processing of value evaluations and reward potential in response to rational advertising appeals.

The forgoing buttress the need for marketers to be extra careful in the use of advertising appeal; and leads to the following conjectures:

- 1) **H_A**: There is a significant relationship between factual appeal and consumers' awareness of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt.
- 2) **H_A**: There is a significant relationship between factual appeal and consumers' change of attitude towards four-star hotels in Port Harcourt.
- 3) **H_A**: There is a significant relationship between factual appeal and salience of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design with a correlational inquiry type to determine the relationship between factual appeal and advertising effectiveness of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt. The population of the study consist twelve (12) four-star hotels in Port Harcourt as indicated in Tripadvisor (2024), and a census was taken. The study collected data from thirty-six (36) respondents on a sample frame of 3 respondents per hotel.

The respondents were business manager, front desk officer, and sales/booking manager of the four-star hotels. The study utilized structured questionnaire designed in the 5-point Likert scale to obtain Publication of the Department of Marketing, Rivers State University

primary data. The instrument was validated by academic and industry experts; while its reliability was confirmed through the Cronbach's Alpha test with a threshold of 0.70 set by Nunally (1978). Table 1 shows the result of the reliability test.

The study utilized descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse the data generated from the survey. Firstly, it used descriptive statistics (frequencies, measures of central tendencies and measures of dispersion) to present and describe the data; and secondly, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), an inferential statistical tool was used to test the hypotheses. The decision rule was: critical value = 0.01. Thus, reject accept alternate hypotheses if probability value is less than critical value.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis of items of all variables

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
1	Factual Appeal	4	0.859
2	Brand Awareness	4	0.837
3	Attitude Change	4	0.797
4	Salience	4	0.815

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Factual Appeal

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
To what extent does your organization ensure that advertising messages are supported by verifiable data and statistics?	31	111	3.58	1.455	2.118
To what extent does your organization ensure that advertising messages are credible and trustworthy?	31	136	4.39	1.202	1.445
To what extent does your organization ensure that claims made in advertisements can be substantiated with evidence?	31	133	4.29	.902	.813
To what extent does your organization ensure that product descriptions in marketing materials are accurate and detailed?	31	135	4.35	1.082	1.170
Valid N (listwise)	31				

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 2 revealed that majority of the responses to items on factual appeal are on the higher side of the Likert scale. As a result, the mean scores are greater than 3.00. Specifically, item 2 which sought to ascertain the extent to which four-star hotels in Port Harcourt ensure that advertising messages are credible and trustworthy, has the highest sum of 136 and a mean score of 4.39. This indicates that item 2 is the most manifest property of factual appeal. Also, item 2 has the highest standard deviation of 1.202 and variance of 1.445, indicating that responses spread most on item 2 compared to other items.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Brand Awareness

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
To what extent do you believe that your brand is popular in the marketplace?	31	101	3.26	1.413	1.998
To what extent do you believe that your brand is easily identifiable amongst other similar brands?	31	134	4.32	1.301	1.692
To what extent do you believe that customers recall your brand attributes?	31	119	3.84	1.128	1.273
To what extent do you believe that your brand is associated with high-quality products or services?	31	112	3.61	1.430	2.045
Valid N (listwise)	31				

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 3 reveal that more of responses to items on brand awareness fall on the higher side of the scale. This resulted in means scores that are greater than 3.00. Specifically, item 2 which sought to ascertain the extent to which four-star hotels in Port Harcourt believe that their brand are easily identifiable amongst similar brands, has the highest sum of 134 and the highest mean score of 4.32. This indicates that item 2 is the most prominent attribute of brand awareness. Also, item 2 has the highest standard deviation of 1.301 and variance of 1.692, indicating that responses spread most in item 2 compared to others.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Attitude Change

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
To what extent do you believe that your promotional messages positively influence customer perceptions of your products?	31	119	3.84	1.241	1.540
To what extent do you believe that your marketing strategies succeed in altering negative perceptions about your brand?	31	125	4.03	1.110	1.232
To what extent do you believe that your advertising efforts encourage customers to feel more favorable towards your company?	31	119	3.84	1.186	1.406
To what extent do you believe that your brand's communication efforts successfully shift consumer attitudes from neutral to positive?	31	129	4.16	1.186	1.406
Valid N (listwise)	31				

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 4 reveals that most responses to items on attitude change fall to the higher side of the Likert scale (3-5). As a result, the mean scores are greater than 3.00. Specifically, item 4 which sought to ascertain the extent to which four-star hotels in Port Harcourt believe that their communication efforts successfully shift consumer attitudes from neutral to positive, has the highest sum of 129 and a mean score of 4.16. This indicates that item is the strongest feature of the variable. Also, item 4 has the highest standard deviation of 1.186 and variance of 1.406, indicating that responses spread most in item 4 compared to other items.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Salience

	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
To what extent does your brand stand out among other brands?	31	127	4.10	1.326	1.757
To what extent do customers notice your advertising messages?	31	133	4.29	1.270	1.613
To what extent is your advertising message perceived to be prominent by customers?	31	120	3.87	1.118	1.249
To what extent do you believe that your brand has a strong presence across various media and marketing channels?	31	124	4.00	1.317	1.733
Valid N (listwise)	31				

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 5 shows that most of the responses to items on salience fall to the higher side of the scale which ranges from 1 to 5. Thus, the mean scores are greater than 3.00. Specifically, item 2 which sought to ascertain the extent to which customers of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt notice advertising messages, has the highest sum of 133 and therefore the highest mean score of 4.29. This indicates that item 2 is the strongest feature of the variable. Also, item 2 has the highest standard deviation of 1.270 and variance of 1.613, indicating that responses spread most in item 2 compared to other items.

Table 6: Relationship between Factual Appeal and Brand Awareness

		Factual Appeal	Brand Awareness
Factual Appeal	Pearson Correlation	1	.590**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	31	31
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.590**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	31	31

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 6 reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.590** between factual appeal and brand awareness. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between factual appeal and brand awareness. The probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), this shows that the relationship between factual appeal and brand awareness is statistically significant; and implies that factual appeal leads to the achievement of increased brand awareness of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt. Thus, the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between factual appeal and brand awareness of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt was accepted.

Table 7: Relationship between Factual Appeal and Attitude Change

		Factual Appeal	Attitude Change
Factual Appeal	Pearson Correlation	1	.697**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	31	31
Attitude Change	Pearson Correlation	.697**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	31	31

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 7 reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.697** between factual appeal and attitude change. The P(r) value indicates a strong positive relationship between factual appeal and attitude change. The probability value of 0.000 produced by the test, which is less than the critical value of 0.05, shows that the relationship between factual appeal and attitude change is statistically significant; and that four-star hotels in Port Harcourt can rely on factual appeal to elicit attitude change from consumers. Based on this, we accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between factual appeal and attitude change of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Table 8 Relationship between Factual Appeal and Salience

		Factual Appeal	Salience
Factual Appeal	Pearson Correlation	1	.451*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011
	N	31	31
Salience	Pearson Correlation	.451*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	
	N	31	31

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2024.

Table 8 reveals a correlation coefficient of 0.451** between factual appeal and salience. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between factual appeal and salience. The probability value (0.000) is less than the critical value (0.05), showing that the relationship between factual appeal and salience is statistically significant; and that four-star hotels in Port Harcourt achieve salience through factual appeal. Hence, we accept the alternate hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between factual appeal and salience of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt.

Discussion of Findings

The statistical tests conducted has shown that factual appeal has moderate positive and statistically significant relationship with brand awareness; strong positive and statistically significant relationship with attitude change; and moderate positive and statistically significant relationship with salience. These findings are in line with findings of previous studies.

Specifically, the findings coincide with the findings of Soti (2022) that a positive correlation exists between advertising exposure, consumer attitudes, and purchase intentions. The convergence of our finding and that of Soti (2022) emphasizes the power of advertising in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing consumers' decision-making process. Similarly, our findings are in line the findings of Chung and Braun (2022) that logical appeal influences consumers' support for, and intention to recommend it to cause to others.

Similarly, the current findings agree with that of Widya (2019) that rational appeal has significant impact on customer's purchase intention because it provides enough information on which consumers can base their decisions. The findings also align with the position that messages with informational appeal have greater value for firms (Cadet et al., 2017).

In addition, our findings are in line with that of Borborjafari et al. (2016) that factual advertising appeal positively affects both rational thinking style and efficacy of advertising messages; and that of Chang et al. (2016) and Ateh and Reth (2014) that a solid correlation exists between logical appeal and customer happiness.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings and the extent of their consistency with findings of previous studies, this study concludes that a positive significant relationship exists between factual appeal and

advertising effectiveness of four-star hotels in Port Harcourt. Therefore, factual appeal is strategic in providing verifiable, credible and reliable information. Advertising effectiveness measured by brand awareness, attitude change and salience can be enhanced by adopting factual appeal in advertising messages. Thus, the study recommends that four-star hotels in Port Harcourt should adopt factual appeal as an essential strategy to improve the effectiveness of their advertising messages.

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